

1 EXT. IMPERIAL LIBRARY - DAY (TRAN TOR, FLASHBACK) 1

In a few years, it'll burn to the ground -- but right now, it's peaceful and quiet. Still a sanctuary for academia.

SUPER TITLE: "THREE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-EIGHT YEARS AGO"

2 INT. IMPERIAL LIBRARY - RECEPTION - DAY (TRAN TOR, FB) 2

PICK UP RAYCH, strolling through the chamber, a friendly nod to a LIBRARIAN as he heads towards a GRAND STAIRCASE.

SUPER TITLE: "BEFORE THE STAR BRIDGE FALL"

3 INT. LIBRARY - RARE BOOKS ROOM - MOMENTS LATER (TRAN TOR, FB) 3

Raych walks through a labyrinth of bookshelves. *The entire history of the galaxy -- written down.* Each section Raych passes encompasses 1,000 years, starting from most recent and counting backwards --

12000 E.I... 11000 E.I... 10000 E.I...

We glimpse several tantalizing book titles such as: *"Dreaming the Cosmos: A Navigator's Guide to Operating Jump Drives"* and *"Sun-Side -- A Compendium of Tidally Locked Planets"*.

As Raych travels the sections become more sparse. He arrives at a section labeled "B.E.I." (Before Era Imperial).

There are titles we might recognize: the *Quran*, *"Frankenstein," "The Feynman Lectures on Physics," "Parable of the Sower"* and *"The Valley of the Dolls"* --

But Raych is looking for one book in particular and finds it--

4 INT. IMPERIAL LIBRARY - HARI'S OFFICE - DAY (TRAN TOR, FB) 4

TRACK RAYCH down a darkened hallway, heading towards an unmarked door. As he opens it...

RAYCH

Found the one you wanted, Hari--

--Raych stops, startled to find DEMERZEL instead of Hari. She's staring at the PRIME RADIANT on his desk, enraptured.

DEMERZEL

I am looking for Hari too. He was not in his faculty office.

Demerzel remains still. Raych wavers, unsure how to respond.

RAYCH

Are you a... colleague of his?

DEMERZEL

I am an officer of Empire,
investigating the circulation of
prohibited material.

Raych tenses as she removes a small PAMPHLET from her dress.

DEMERZEL (CONT'D)

A banned tract has been circulating
on Trantor. The author could be put
to death...

(pointedly)

... along with anyone who has read
it.

(flipping through tract)

*It is a paper given at the
Streeling University Decennial
Convention, analyzing the rise and
fall of empires -- using a new form
of mathematical analysis called--*

HARI (O.S.)

Psychohistory.

They both turn to find HARI behind them, calm and confident.

RAYCH

Hari?

HARI

It's fine. We've nothing to hide.

He nods. *It's okay.* Raych backs off, but keeps watching.

DEMERZEL

(re: the pamphlet)

This was bait. Clumsy, obvious--

HARI

-- I don't have much use for subtlety.

DEMERZEL

An understatement, when accompanied
by treason.

HARI

What treason-- saying empires fall?
I've been saying that for years.

DEMERZEL

To say it on Helicon is one thing.
To say it on Trantor is another.
And until now, you never invoked
the name "Cleon."

Hari gives something like a shrug. He knows it was provocative.

HARI

It was Empire that brought me here
to begin with. *Someone* must think
my work has value.

And that, of course, is exactly why she's come.

DEMERZEL

Only if you can do what you claim.
Can you?

HARI

Not yet. I have made only the
barest beginning. But it is a
beginning.
(then)
Psychohistory is just mathematics.
I could work out the equations for
you on napkins. Except: there
aren't enough napkins in the
Galaxy. I need trillions of
calculations.

He points to the RADIANT on his desk.

HARI (CONT'D)

So-- the Prime Radiant. Four-
dimensional object, quantum
computer. Given present-day inputs,
it uses my system to spit out the
future.

DEMERZEL

Does it work?

HARI

You tell me.

Slowly, no sudden moves, he FLOURISHES THE RADIANT and puts
it back on the desk. THE MATH EXPANDS, enveloping Demerzel.

HARI (CONT'D)

To test it, I gave it a task: with
enough information... would it
predict something we already know
happened? Something we can verify?
(MORE)

HARI (CONT'D)

(then)

I fed every available record of the early Entun dynasty into the model, and using only the conditions of the Galaxy at that time, it made some curious projections. Of interest: large-scale unrest in the Gold Horse Sector in E.I. 11,640.

Demerzel studies the holo... a RED STARBURST indicating the unrest to which Hari refers...

DEMERZEL

All public records of the Gold Horse Rebellion were destroyed. It is a state secret.

Hari takes a bow. Then CLOSES THE MATH.

HARI

Call it proof of concept. I can do the same with events still to come. All I need is a larger data set.

(re: the library)

Far more than what's on offer here. I need *perfect* information: not half-truths, histories written by the victors, redacted, censored...

Demerzel stares darkly at Hari -- realizing what's going on.

HARI (CONT'D)

... a data set so complete that it could only fit into something... like this...

Hari picks up the book Raych retrieved. Demerzel reads the title: *The Positronic Brain* -- the first compendium written from the shared consciousness of Robots.

DEMERZEL

"The Positronic Brain."

HARI

Do you know it? Not just about Robots, but *written* by one. The first compendium about their shared consciousness. If I had access to a brain like that, I'd have information from every synthetic who ever lived. I find that remarkable, but perhaps you don't.

He waits for her reaction. She gives him very little.

DEMERZEL
What do you want?

HARI
I just told you.

DEMERZEL
You want my memories.

HARI
Millennia of immaculate
recollection. Enough past for me to
predict the future.

DEMERZEL
And for this donation. I would
gain... what?

HARI
Psychohistory could be used to
preserve Empire for as long as
possible. Or spare it the most
violent endgames.

DEMERZEL
And you believe that if there's
even a chance to do so, I won't
decline it.

HARI
Actually, I suspect you *can't*
decline it. Given your--
programming parameters.
(then)
Unless I'm wrong?

He's not.

DEMERZEL
You've said nothing about who would
keep the device.

Hari glances at the Radiant, then back at her.

HARI
Well I'd as soon keep it for now.

DEMERZEL
It would belong to Empire. In fact
it already does. You must know that
some day I will come to you and
claim it.

HARI
And won't *that* be an interesting
day.

Hardball. Tension between them, but both of them have already made their decision. Off Demerzel, as she considers...

5 INT. IMPERIAL FLAGSHIP - MATHEMATICA OBSCURA - SPACE (PREV. 5SHOT)

Demerzel stands in a circular room aboard an Imperial spaceship, the Prime Radiant in her palm. She is studying a swirling MATH SPHERE and clearly doesn't like what she sees.

A RED CRISIS NODE blooms within the center of the math.

SUPER TITLE: "NOW"

DEMERZEL
Zagreus.

An AIDE, (ZAGREUS) 30s and fussy, appears before Demerzel.

ZAGREUS
Yes, Lady Demerzel.

DEMERZEL
I need you to fetch Empire for me
as soon as we clear the gate.

Zagreus nods and exits.

6 EXT. K-TYPE STAR - INNER GALACTIC ARM - SPACE (PREV. SHOT) 6

A blazing orange Type-K giant fills the screen. Arcs of roiling prominences jet outward, shimmering with heat haze.

ANGLE ON A JUMP GATE

A giant, ring-like structure orbiting the star at a seemingly impossibly close distance.

SUPER TITLE: "JUMP GATE PROSPERO"

Then, the void within the gate's ring shimmers. Briefly, a mirage-like view of Trantor comes into focus -- the point of origin from which the gate is now connected.

FIVE RUBICON-CLASS IMPERIAL SHIPS

Appear in Delta-formation. Stately grandeur. And as the camera drifts towards the flagship--

7

EXT. IMPERIAL FLAGSHIP - VIEWING DECK - SPACE

7

A LONE FIGURE stands on an exterior viewing deck. He's not wearing a spacesuit, nor any visible means of protection.

IT'S DAWN (CLEON²⁵)

But *this* Dawn feels different. He's on the brink of becoming Day and is projecting a convincing air of confidence.

DAWN

How long are you going to keep me waiting, Zagreus?

ZAGREUS (O.S.)

I'm...

DAWN

...uncomfortable, I know. Your terror is palpable.

Dawn turns, his gaze taking us to Zagreus, who skulks in a nearby vestibule leading to one of the ship's airlocks.

DAWN (CONT'D)

We're perfectly safe. The gate harnesses the star's own energy, projecting an envelope of anti-gravity around us and diverting the intense heat. It's a K-type giant. Massive compared to Trantor's primary...

ZAGREUS

And impressive as it is, it just--

DAWN

It's not impressive. It's mundane. And it's fucking inconvenient.

Dawn shakes his head, gesturing at the gate.

DAWN (CONT'D)

Time was, Empire could jump anywhere our hearts desired. Now, thanks to the loss of the Spacers, we're fettered to *these* constructs. Forced to hail a ride like the rest of the fucking galaxy.

(beat, stewing)

So. Where does the Council vote currently stand?

ZAGREUS

Eighty-five yea, seventy-five nay.
Forty undeclared.

DAWN

So there's work to do.
(adjusting)
But you didn't risk pissing
yourself just to hear me complain.

ZAGREUS

Lady Demerzel would like a word,
Empire.

DAWN

Then Lady Demerzel shall have it.